

Getting advice

Listen to someone getting advice from a friend to practise and improve your listening skills.

Before listening

Do the preparation task first. Then listen to the audio and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

Vocabulary

1. anxiety
2. to dread
3. a symptom
4. a panic attack
5. to hyperventilate
6. a distraction
7. to spin
8. together

Definition

- a. to fear something happening in the future
- b. a sudden feeling of intense fear which may include fast heart rate, sweating, shaking and being out of breath
- c. confident and organised
- d. an uncomfortable feeling of nervousness or worry
- e. a sign you have an illness or health condition
- f. to breathe too fast, causing too much oxygen to enter the blood
- g. to turn very fast
- h. something that stops you from focusing on what you're doing

Tasks

Task 1

Circle the best answer.

1. What has made Clara check on Ben?
 - a. He missed their class that day.
 - b. He's missed a few classes.
 - c. He has a lot of essays to write.

2. What does Ben do at the beginning of the conversation?
 - a. He makes the problem sound more than it is.
 - b. He makes the problem sound less than it is.
 - c. He is honest about the problem from the start.

3. What is the main way Ben's anxiety is affecting normal life?
 - a. He feels stupid.
 - b. He can't remember what day it is.
 - c. He doesn't want to go out.

4. What is the surprising thing about panic attacks, according to Clara?
 - a. How many people have them.
 - b. That they make you feel so bad.
 - c. That people keep their panic attacks private.

5. How does Clara recognise Ben's problem is panic attacks?
 - a. She had the same problem in the past.
 - b. She has the same problem now.
 - c. She and Ben live together.

6. What does Clara warn Ben about the advice she will give?
 - a. It will be difficult to hear.
 - b. It won't be easy to follow.
 - c. It isn't very practical.

Task 2

Write a number (1–6) to put the pieces of advice in the order they are mentioned.

_____ Do regular physical activity as part of your lifestyle.

_____ Do something to make your heart beat too fast.

_____ Do something to keep your mind busy.

_____ Talk to a doctor.

_____ Make yourself breathe too fast on purpose.

_____ Put yourself in a stressful situation.

Discussion

What makes you nervous or anxious?

Transcript

Clara: Hi, how are you? I haven't seen you in class for a while.

Ben: Good, thanks. You?

Clara: Great, as long as I don't think too hard about all the essays I have to write this term!

Ben: Yeah ...

Clara: Hey, are you OK?

Ben: I have to admit, I'm struggling a bit. Maybe even a lot. I've not been sleeping well at all and then I can't concentrate. And all these things are just going around and around in my head.

Clara: Mmm ... that doesn't sound good. So, you're sleeping badly and you can't concentrate. Is that all it is, do you think?

Ben: Well, if I'm honest, it's more than that. I'm starting to dread going outside. I find myself worrying about stupid things like what if I forget the way home. Or, what if I go to class thinking it's Monday but actually it's Friday and I'm in the wrong place at the wrong time. It sounds even more stupid when I say it out loud. It took me two hours to leave the house today.

Clara: It doesn't sound stupid at all. It actually sounds a lot like me last year.

Ben: Really? But you're so together!

Clara: I've learned to be, but even I still have bad days. I used to have panic attacks and everything. When you were trying to leave the house today, how did you feel?

Ben: Like I couldn't breathe. And my heart was going way too fast.

Clara: Hmm ... that sounds like a panic attack to me.

Ben: I thought I was going to die.

Clara: You'd be surprised how common they are. Loads of people have them, they just don't talk about it.

Ben: How did you get over them?

Clara: I actually talked to a doctor about it, and you should too. But I learned some practical things as well. Though they're easier said than done, and they're going to sound weird, so hear me out, OK?

Ben: OK ...

Clara: So, one thing I did was to try to reduce the power of the anxiety and the panic attacks when they came. So – and this may sound strange – at a time when you're feeling safe and OK, you literally do things that make your heart start racing faster and your breathing speed up. Like spinning around on a chair until you're dizzy or hyperventilating so you're short of breath.

Ben: That sounds awful!

Clara: It is, but it means you get used to the symptoms, so they feel less scary.

Ben: Right.

Clara: Then you have to deliberately do the things that usually make you feel panic. So, if it's going to class on Monday and being scared you've got the wrong day, on Monday you go to class. If you let the anxiety control you by making you stay at home, it just makes it worse the next time you really do have to go out.

Ben: And what did you do if a panic attack came anyway?

Clara: I had a distraction plan. So, I walked everywhere instead of taking the bus because the exercise helped, but also I did things like count trees or red cars or something. Whatever it was didn't matter, as long as I had something else to focus on.

Ben: I can't tell you how much I appreciate this. I thought ...

Answers

Preparation task

1. d
2. a
3. e
4. b
5. f
6. h
7. g
8. c

Task 1

1. b
2. b
3. c
4. a
5. a
6. b

Task 2

1. Talk to a doctor.
2. Do something to make your heart beat too fast.
3. Make yourself breathe too fast on purpose.
4. Put yourself in a stressful situation.
5. Do regular physical activity as part of your lifestyle.
6. Do something to keep your mind busy.